

A REVIEW OF ANTHONY KANU'S "IGWEBUIKE AS A WHOLISTIC RESPONSE TO THE PROBLEM OF EVIL AND HUMAN SUFFERING"

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The problem of evil and human suffering have been a disturbing factor for human beings since the existence of the world. Human beings have been trying their best to stop or reduce the source of evil and human sufferings it brings to human existence. But it seems the more human beings try to stop it, the more it increases in the everyday lives of human beings. Not only does it keep increasing but in different dimensions. Does it mean that it has no end, or its source cannot be traced or controlled?

Hence Kanu came up with *Igwebuike* as a wholistic response to the problem of evil and human suffering. This paper under review is timely in our society today judging from the number of human beings going into depression, becoming mad overnight due to one suffering or problem of the other. Again many people in our society are committing suicide because of the problem of evil and its consequent suffering that follows it. The problem of evil and its suffering to human beings ranges from psychological, emotional to so many other deeper problems.

The paper under review tries to give a response to these problems in order to ameliorate human sufferings. The paper is divided into five parts for easy understanding and its application towards solving problems of human suffering. The introductory part traces the origin of evil through Igbo mythology which dates back to the earliest periods of human history. In the western world, the problem of evil and human sufferings has agitated many authors like Augustine who sought the answer to the problem of evil and human suffering. Though Kanu made it clear that the aim of this paper is not about the origin of human suffering but on how to help human sufferings, hence several approaches were examined but an Igbo-African wholistic approach was adopted to explain and help human suffering.

In the approaches to the problem of evil and human suffering, dualistic approach holds that there are two opposing forces at work in the world good and evil (bad), light and darkness. This view was rejected because it is opposed to monotheism of Christian God. Augustine advanced the Manichean dualistic approach in solving the problem of evil. The Manicheans claimed that *ormuzd* and *Ahriman* are two principles of good and evil respectively found in the world. Their conflicts reflect the evil found in the world but this was rejected by Augustine in favour of Plotinus.

The classical approach or Augustinian theodicy holds the view that evil and human suffering came as a result of free choice of human beings, beginning with Adam and Even (Original son). Augustine divided human nature into three states: the state of original blessedness, fallenness and restored nature. The question that arises from this approach is: is very human suffering caused by the free choice of human beings? Hence, the theory does not really hold water.

The expiatory approach sees evil and human suffering as God's punishment. This means that God punishes humans by evil and suffering. According to Kanu its flaws lies on the view that it distorts our understanding of God as loving and merciful Father. Redemptive approach sees our suffering as redemptive. It took its root or reference to the suffering servant songs in Isaiah and on the passion and death of Jesus Christ. It is criticized on the ground that human being cannot possess the redemptive power being just ordinary human. Process approach sees evil and suffering as realities that one will pass through, in an unfinished world, evolving towards its goals. This view according to Kanu (2014) is criticized because it potrays God as being harsh and suffering as necessary condition of life.

Remedial approach sees evil and suffering as being remedial, that is God uses them as tests. God uses suffering and evil to test our love towards Him. This view among other things sees God as harsh task master. Faith solution approach sees evil and suffering as mysteries. In the face of suffering one is to follow or imitate the examples of Job and Jesus Christ without questioning the situation. Though accepted more by Christians because it focuses on Jesus Christ. It is faulted for its tendency to promote "Christian masochism".

The third part of the paper dealt with *Igwebuike* as a wholistic approach to human suffering. Kanu described the concept of *Igwebuike* in general. *Igwebuike* according to Kanu is therefore, "a philosophy of harmonization and complementation" (p. 7). It is anchored on the African world view, from

philosophy of *Igwebuike* as being complementary; it shows that no individual approach to the problem of evil and human suffering can adequately provides solution of evil and suffering among human beings. *Igwebuike* with its principle of solidarity among people can always attack evil and human suffering in a wholistic manner.

The pragmatic approach being adopted by *Igwebuike* is heavily anchored on the basis that it is indifference that makes evil to persist. Kanu advocated that there is need for an ethics of responsibility in the face of evil and human suffering, that is, massively seeking for solution and massively attacking the evil rather than sit and look towards the future or just hoping on God as other approaches advocated. In this case, *Igwebuike* as a principle reminds us of the adage that “necessity is the mother of inventions”. It is through the moral responsibility of community in the face of human suffering that solution can be found. Community in solidarity will always find a practical way to alleviate human suffering posing a challenge in a community.

In conclusion, Kanu argues positively the necessity of a wholistic approach to the problem of human suffering. Different approaches as parts of the whole cannot give solution to the problem of human suffering. Common problems equally calls for common solution like in the spread of infectious diseases called Ebola. The solidarity of *Igwebuike* was needed and was used in curbing the situation.

Igwebuike as a concept, through its propagator Kanu has helped us, especially the Africans to seek unity in every thing we are doing since it is in our world view and natural to Africans. For individualism on the western world has affected our world view negatively. On the contrary, the problem of evil and human suffering is not tied to some parts of world, for *Igwebuike* as a concept seems to suggest that it can only fit into the context of the African world views. Since we have mentioned that the problem of evil and human suffering is universal. So, the complementary and solidarity of *Igwebuike* cannot be practiced in the Western world because of individualism seemingly practiced by them, what then remains about them in response to problem of evil and human suffering since it is community based?

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